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I. RE-ELECTION OF OFFICERS AT FIRST 1990 MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE: STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On 10 January 1990, the Committee unanimously re-elected Her Excellency Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal) as Chairman, His Excellency Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva (Cuba) and His Excellency Mr. Noor Ahmad Noor (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairmen, and His Excellency Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta) as Rapporteur.

The Committee also decided to re-establish its open-ended working group under the Chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta) and Mr. Dinesh Kumar Jain (India) as Vice-Chairman.

After congratulating the Chairman and other members of the Bureau on their re-election, the Secretary-General made the following statement (see SG/SM/4393-GA/PAL/455):

> "The search for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East dispute so as to enable the Palestinian people to enjoy their inalienable rights is one to which I attribute great importance. This Committee resumes its work with a mandate renewed by a decision of the General Assembly, supported by an overwhelming majority of the Member States and in the context of continuing international efforts to bring the parties to the negotiating table.
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> "The Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the intifadah, which has now entered its third year, remains a matter of serious international concern. In contrast to the nuances of the diplomatic process, the message of the intifadah is direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which has been in effect for 22 years, will continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people will remain committed to the exercise of their legitimate political rights, including self-determination.
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> "During the past year, confrontations involving Israelis and Palestinians have continued unabated, with much bloodshed. Hundreds have been killed and thousands have been wounded, including many children. Incarcerations on a large scale continue.
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> "During the past year, I have repeatedly expressed concern at these widespread violations of human rights and have joined the Security Council and the General Assembly in calling upon Israel to abide by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. In this atmosphere, it seems to me imperative that a way must be found, and soon, to begin an effective negotiating process that can restore hope in the possibility that a just and durable peace can be obtained.

"The General Assembly, in its resolution 44/42, has called once again for the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

"The General Assembly has also invited the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the international peace conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee. It also requested me to continue my efforts with the parties concerned and, in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the conference.

"During the past year, the United Nations has been intensely involved in activities to bring peace to troubled regions of the world. As we are all too well aware, the Middle East is an explosive area and events or trends in one place almost invariably have repercussions elsewhere. My regret at the lack of progress in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict is all the greater given the significant steps that have been taken towards the resolution of other disputes.

"It is essential that a fully concerted and well co-ordinated effort be made by the international community to help the parties enter into an effective negotiating process that will lead to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. For my part, I shall do all that I can to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to me in this regard.

"As you know, the General Assembly has once again endorsed the recommendations of this Committee and has requested that I continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks and to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources for the continuation of its programme of work.

"There is a general agreement that it is, to a large extent, thanks to the tireless efforts of the Committee, that the rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people are now better understood and supported. I am pleased to note that the programme of regional seminars, information activities and meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as preparation of studies, publications and monitoring reports undertaken under the guidance of the Committee has contributed to ensuring an increased knowledge of this question world-wide.

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"I reaffirm my full support to your Committee in all its endeavours to concert international efforts so as to enable the Palestinian people to gain their legitimate rights, which have been recognized and reiterated by the General Assembly."

II. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On 15 January 1990, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General (see A/44/914-S/21089) the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People drew most urgent attention to the further escalations of repression by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory. The full text of the letter is as follows:

"In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to draw your most urgent attention to the further escalation of repression by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory.

"Since my letter to you of 6 December 1989 (A/44/851-S/21009), more Palestinians have been killed and injured. According to a recent report of the DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, the number of Palestinians killed between the beginning of the intifadah in December 1987 and 8 December 1989 has reached 823, of whom one quarter were children under 16. The Al-Fajr newspaper reported on 4 January 1990 that 28 Palestinians, including 10 children under 17, had been killed by the Israeli army during December 1989.

"On 14 December, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported that, according to autopsy findings released by the army, 22-day-old Baraá Labadi from the village of al-Yamun in the West Bank had died of suffocation. The findings confirmed the mother's report that the baby had choked to death during a pre-dawn raid on her house by Israeli soldiers and not as a result of exposure, as claimed by the army.

"On 26 December 1989, The Jerusalem Post reported that two pathologists had concluded that Khaled al-Sheikh Ali from Gaza had died a week earlier in the Shin Beth (Security Service) prison from a beating, although his family had been told by the Gaza military commander that he had died of a heart attack. Israeli civil rights lawyers and Gazan lawyers, who had requested the autopsy, suspected that the death, the third of its kind in Gaza, might have been caused by torture during a Shin Beth investigation.

"In its January 1990 newsletter, Amnesty International said that "it feared the Israeli Government had effectively condoned and even encouraged extra judicial executions of Palestinians by its forces in order to help control unrest during the intifadah in the occupied territories". The organization expressed concern that "the guidelines appear to permit the unjustifiable killing of people who are involved in activities which do not necessarily endanger life or who may simply be wearing masks".

"Harsh collective punishment also continues to be imposed, aimed particularly at children. The Jerusalem Post reported on 14 December 1989 that a military order closing universities and other institutions of higher education in the occupied Palestinian territory had been renewed for an additional three months. The universities have been closed by military order since February 1988. The New York Times reported on 12 December 1989 that the Israeli army had announced that it would begin impounding property or sealing homes belonging to the parents of Palestinian children who threw stones at soldiers. A military spokesman was quoted as saying that "in lieu of bail, valuables can be confiscated or a room can be sealed for a period of time". Previously, the army had tried to deter children by fining, arresting and gaoling their parents.

"Deeply alarmed at the extreme gravity of these increasing incidents of oppression and the mounting loss of life, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People deplores once again the repressive policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in violation of its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and are contrary to the provisions of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The Committee considers that the adoption of urgent measures by the Security Council to provide international protection to Palestinian civilians, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolutions 43/233 of 20 April 1989 and 44/2 of 6 October 1989, is imperative. The Committee would also greatly appreciate appropriate action by you and by the organizations of the United Nations system to alleviate the suffering of the unarmed Palestinian civilians under occupation, especially women and children.

"The Committee wishes to stress once again the urgent need to advance towards a comprehensive and just settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with the principles reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/43 of 6 December 1989, and it reiterates it appeal to you and to all concerned to intensify all efforts to attain this essential objective.

III. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON REPRESSION IN THE ISRAELI OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

On 18 January 1990, the European Parliament adopted the following resolution by show of hands:

The European Parliament

A. having regard to the "1990, Time for Peace" initiative of the European peace movements which, in cooperation with their Israeli and Palestinian counterparts, assembled 30,000 people in a demonstration around the old city of Jerusalem at the end of December, in which numerous European elected representatives, including members of the European Parliament, took part, and whereas this legal demonstration was brutally repressed by the Israeli police,

B. having regard to the dramatic situation of the Palestinians who have been living under Israeli occupation for 22 years and who are subject to arbitrary judicial and political measures and to an increasing repression which, as well as adults, also effects children, in disregard of the 4th Geneva Convention,

C. recalling the stands it has already taken on the situation in the Middle East and the occupied territories, in particular that of 14 December 1989 on the continued ban on teaching for the Palestinian population of the West Bank,

D. having regard to the damning report just published by Amnesty International on Israeli repression in the occupied territories, which criticizes:

- Israel's excessive and indiscriminate use of force,
- the systematic maltreatment of Palestinian prisoners, which has led to 100 deaths,
- the frequent use of live and plastic bullets,
- the murder of Palestinians suspected of leading the Intifada who were unarmed at the time of their arrest,

E. having regard to the sentences which have already been or are about to be handed down to Israeli citizens; whereas such legislation forces citizens to break the law in order to follow their conscience and whereas direct dialogue between the Israeli authorities and the PLO is the key to a political solution of the Palestinian question,

F. whereas, in the wake of the Intifada and the declaration adopted in Algiers by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988, the Palestinian people is looking to the international community, and in particular the EEC, to play a more active role in the search for peace in the Middle East,

G. whereas the twelve Member States of the EEC remain committed to the status of Jerusalem as defined in United Nations Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947,

H. paying tribute to those Israeli citizens who have become personally involved in the search for a peaceful solution, at the risk of being prosecuted and sentenced by the courts;

I. stressing that, in certain cases, civil disobedience is the only response which allows citizens to give positive expression to their commitment to peace and justice;

1. Condemns the brutal intervention of the Israeli police during the two legal demonstrations on 29 and 30 December 1989, there being no justification either for the use of force and tear gas or for the humiliation and internment of the participants;

2. Calls on the Presidency of the Council to lodge an official protest with the Israeli Government concerning the events of 30 December 1989, in particular the maltreatment of Community citizens and MEPs, in which Mrs. Dacia Velent was beaten and detained by the police, despite the fact that she had clearly stated that she was a Member of the European Parliament, Marisa Manno, an Italian citizen, lost an eye as a result of the injuries caused by the Israeli police, and some 60 Israeli and Palestinian citizens reported injuries of various kinds.

3. Calls for a specialized European commission of inquiry to determine the exact nature of the toxic gases used, which can cause death in a confined space;

4. Recalls its decision of 14 December 1989 and, in view of the fact that all Palestinian universities have remained closed since January 1988, calls on the Commission to freeze immediately budget heading 7394 allocated to scientific cooperation with Israel;

5. Calls on the Commission to examine closely whether the existing Treaties between the EC and Israel are really being observed, in particular with respect to products from the occupied territories, and to report to the EP;

6. Calls on the Israeli Government finally to recognize and implement the many resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council with respect to Israel and Palestine;

7. Appeals to the Israeli authorities to repeal the law banning meetings between Israeli citizens and Palestinians from the PLO;

8. Calls on these authorities to free the citizens detained under this law and to halt all proceedings which are now under way or are liable to be initiated on the same grounds;

9. Calls on the Foreign Ministers meeting in EPC to implement all the necessary measures to open a process of negotiation, in particular through the organization of an international conference on peace in the Middle East under the auspices of the UN, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the State of Israel and the PLO;

10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Israeli Government, the PLO, the United Nations and the Foreign Ministers meeting in EPC.

IV. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION

The following information came to the attention of the Division for Palestinian Rights, in the course of January:

1. "I.C.C.P. Newsletter No. 20", available from: the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGO's on the Question of Palestine, 150 Route de Ferney, Case Postale 2100, CH 1211 Genève 2, Switzerland.

2. "Palestine News Agency, Inc.", newsletter available from: National Press Building, Suite 1071, 529 14th Street N.W., Washington D.C. 20045, United States of America

3. "Journal of the All India Indo-Arab Friendship Association", available from: MIG 38-B, Pocket C, Ashok Vihar-III, Delhi 110052, India.

4. "Jerusalem", publication of Palestine Committee for NGO's available from: B.P. 554, Tunis, Cedex 1080, Tunis, Tunisia.

5. "Al Hadaf Newsletter", available from: Al Hadaf Cultural Foundation, P.O. Box 169, 30010 VMM El Fahm, Israel.

6. "Another Viewpoint", monthly newsletter available from: 604, Barbera Place, Davis, CA 95616, Unites States of America.

7. "ADC Times", news and opinions of the American-Arab Anti-discrimination Committee, available from: 4201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20008, United States of America.

8. "Palestine Focus", publication by Palestine Solidarity Committee/Palestine Focus, P.O. Box 27462 San Francisco, CA 94127, United States of America.

9. "Focus", publication of Amnesty International. Available from: Amnesty International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom, or Amnesty International, United Nations Office, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017, United States of America.

10. "Jewish Committee on the Middle East", pamphlet prepared by Professor Charles L. Black, Jr., entitled "Let us rethink our special relationship with Israel", available from: JCOME, P.O. Box 18367, Washington, D.C. 20036, United States of America.

11. "Samedoon, Friends of Palestinian Prisoners", newsletter available from: P.O. Box 15288, Washington, D.C. 20003, United States of America.

12. "Act Now", publication of International Centre for Trade Union Rights, available from: ICTUR, P.O. Box 34, 120 00 Prague 2, Czechoslovakia.

13. "The Other Front", monthly publication available from: the alternative Information Center, 14 Korrsh Street, P.O. Box 24278 Jerusalem.